

Overall Perception and Experiences of Pagpag Consumers and Its Impact on Their Physio-Psychological and Nutritional Well-Being Among Young Adults in Barangay 105 - Zone 8, Tondo, Manila

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explored the perceptions, experiences, and health implications of consuming *pagpag*—salvaged food from fast-food establishments—among young adults in Barangay 105, Zone 8, Tondo, Manila. Despite its health risks, including foodborne diseases and nutritional deficiencies, *pagpag* serves as a low-cost and accessible food source for those facing economic hardship. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combined qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys to assess the physio-psychological and nutritional impacts of *pagpag* consumption. Findings showed that financial constraints were the primary driver behind *pagpag* consumption, with affordability and availability outweighing health concerns. While key informants acknowledged the risks, the lack of affordable alternatives sustains the practice. The study revealed that *pagpag* consumption is normalized within families and communities, influenced by socio-economic conditions and cultural practices. It contributed to nutritional deficiencies and heightened vulnerability to foodborne illnesses, while also fostering stigma and anxiety. This research advocated for public health interventions to address the health risks of *pagpag* and improve food security in marginalized communities, advancing the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being).

Keywords: Pagpag, Health risk, Food insecurity

INTRODUCTION

Food is one of the necessities of life. Food contains nutrients and substances essential for the growth, repair, and maintenance of body tissues and for the regulation of vital processes. Nutrients provide the energy our bodies need to function. (Serio et al., 2023). "*Pagpag*," a Tagalog term, refers to leftover or discarded food collected from rubbish, re-cooked, and eaten by impoverished Filipinos in slum areas. For many people, *pagpag* shows their daily fight to survive and their ability to make the best out of what little they have. For those in poverty, it represents strength, while for wealthier people, it seems like a sign of waste. This difference shows the big gap between rich and poor in Philippine society today.

According to the World Wildlife Fund–Philippines (2023), the irony is that, in the same city, impoverished Filipinos search for salvageable food to survive. Despite its risks, *pagpag* has become an economic lifeline in slum areas like Tondo, where people can even buy *pagpag* as a cheaper food option. However, this practice comes with serious health risks: *pagpag* consumers face exposure to foodborne illnesses, malnutrition, and the possibility of eating contaminated food. When the poorest of the poor are scrounging for recoverable food scraps in garbage bins, this level of waste is criminal. A relationship exists between food insecurity and increased adiposity, especially in low-income populations. This could provide insights into how inconsistent access to food, like relying on *pagpag*, might affect the physical health profile of young adults. Women and individuals from certain racial groups with food insecurity were found to have higher risks of obesity, highlighting the physiological consequence of consuming inexpensive but unhealthy food options. (Myers, 2020).

One study published by Guiné (2023) examined the interplay between psychological factors and food choices, highlighting how emotional states like stress and depression lead to unhealthy eating patterns. According to Odoms-Young et al. (2024), it would be observed that the prevalence of food insecurity correlates to poor



nutrition and, accordingly, health disparities for most marginalized communities, hence their nutritional deprivation. This gap indicates the need for a comprehensive mixed-methods approach that integrates both qualitative narratives and quantitative health indicators, which this research provides.

The development of this research is significant because it highlights a pressing public health concern that is often overlooked. Understanding the physio-psychological and nutritional impact of *pagpag* among young adults can offer evidence-based insights for community health programs, policy formation, and targeted interventions. It also supports the goals of Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) by addressing an urgent issue related to food safety, poverty, and health equity. The topic is also important because *pagpag* consumption continues to persist despite known risks—indicating a deeper socioeconomic crisis that requires urgent, informed, and multidimensional solutions.

Anchored on these realities, this study was developed to generate a holistic understanding of *pagpag* consumption within an urban poor setting. Specifically, it aims to examine the overall perceptions and lived experiences of *pagpag* consumers; determine the physio-psychological impacts such as stress, anxiety, and emotional responses; assess nutritional-related indicators including vital signs, capillary blood glucose, and nutritional status; and provide recommendations that may serve as a basis for an action plan to improve health and food security within the community.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed an exploratory sequential design, a mixed-methods approach starting with a qualitative phase to explore key informants' perceptions and experiences, followed by a quantitative phase to measure specific health aspects related to *pagpag* consumption. The qualitative phase involved structured interviews with purposively selected *pagpag* consumers from Barangay 105 – Zone 8, Tondo, Manila, focusing on their lived experiences, perceptions, and physio-psychological and nutritional well-being. Insights from this phase guided the development of a quantitative survey assessing physio-psychological and nutritional aspects using a 4-point Likert scale and a nutritional health checklist. Integrating both methods provided a comprehensive understanding of the impact of *pagpag* consumption on young adults' health, aligning with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), and enhancing reliability and validity.

Research Variable

The study aimed to explore perceptions and experiences of *pagpag* consumers and assess its impact on their physio-psychological and nutritional well-being. Specifically, it addressed: 1) perceptions of young adults regarding *pagpag* consumption, 2) lived experiences of *pagpag* consumers, 3) impact on physio-psychological well-being, 4) impact on nutritional well-being (via vital signs, capillary blood glucose, and nutritional status), and 5) recommendations for an action plan based on findings.

Sample and Population

Purposive sampling was used to select participants based on predetermined characteristics. Demographic information—age, gender, years of residence, income source, and civil status—was first collected. Interviews then assessed perceptions, experiences, and physio-psychological and nutritional aspects, providing insight into health concerns in the community. Barangay 105 – Zone 8, Tondo, Manila, is home to underprivileged families. The locale was selected to explore in-depth the health, perceptions, and experiences of *pagpag* consumers and provide insights to raise awareness about health and nutrition. Key informants were *pagpag* consumers aged 20–39 years and were residents consuming *pagpag* as part of their food source.

Research Instrument

A structured interview with both open- and close-ended questions was used to explore perceptions and experiences. A 4-point Likert scale (“high impact” to “no impact at all”) assessed attitudes. The qualitative questionnaire focused on Health Perceptions and Life Experiences, while the quantitative questionnaire assessed Physio-psychological and Nutritional Well-Being.



Data Gathering Procedure

Data from thirty key informants were analyzed using thematic analysis for qualitative insights and descriptive analysis for quantitative support. This combined approach highlighted factors influencing physio-psychological and nutritional well-being and provided an evidence-based discussion aligned with SDG 3.

Data Analysis

The study followed a systematic and ethical approach. Instruments were designed based on literature review, validated by experts, and approved by local authorities. Informants were fully informed of the study's purpose, objectives, and ethical considerations, providing voluntary consent. Qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, while quantitative data were examined with descriptive statistics. Results were interpreted in alignment with the study's objectives and SDG 3.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly observed. Informed consent ensured respect for participants, while confidentiality safeguarded identities. All information was securely stored, and participants were treated equitably and without bias, ensuring fairness and inclusivity throughout the study.

RESULTS

The main objective of this research paper is to conduct an in-depth exploration of the perceptions, experiences, physio-psychological states, and nutritional well-being of young adults who consume *pagpag*. Data gathered through the research questions were analyzed using qualitative methods and transcribed verbatim. The findings were then categorized and presented according to the key themes derived from the research questions, making the results easier to understand and use as a reference.

Qualitative Data

The following eight (8) themes were developed from the results of the guide questionnaires and from the statement of the problem:

Perceptions of Young Adults Regarding the Consumption of *Pagpag*

Coping Mechanism

- **KI 1:** "*Wala naman po. Maayos naman po pagkahugas ng pagpag eh, tatlong beses hinuhugasan bago kainin. Wala naman akong nararamdaman nung kumain ako ng pagpag.*" (**There's nothing wrong. The *pagpag* is washed well; it's washed three times before being eaten. I didn't feel anything bad when I ate it.**)
- **KI 4:** "*Kaya siya sa pamilya, kasi mas nakakatipid kami. Nakakabili pa kami ng bigas sa 100 pesos, may sobra pa pang gatas. 30 pesos lang kasi yung pagpag.*" (**We use it in the family because we save more money. We can still buy rice with 100 pesos, and there is even enough left for milk. *Pagpag* only costs 30 pesos.**)
- **KI 30:** "*Ano naman nakakaminus sa gastusin. Ayun, trenta pesos lang. Bibili ka ng manok ang mahal edi ayun na lang po. Tsaka nakakabusog pa pag maraming kanin ka sinasalang.*" (**It reduces expenses. There, it's just thirty pesos. If you buy fresh chicken, it's so expensive, so we just go with that. Also, it's filling when you pair it with a lot of rice.**)
- **KI 19:** "*Pangtawid gutom minsan kasi wala eh parang pambiling ano hindi nalang bibili.*" (**It's a way to stave off hunger sometimes because when there is no money to buy anything else, we just don't buy other food.**)
- **KI 7:** "*Wala naman ako nagkakasakit. Minsan kasi pag wala kang budget talagang napipilitan kami mag pagpag. Kung meron kaming budget, hindi kami kakain.*" (**I don't get sick. Sometimes, when you have no budget, we are really forced to eat *pagpag*. If we had a budget, we wouldn't eat it.**)



- **KI 20:** "*Para samin po dahil po nakakatipid naman po siya dahil lalo pag walang wala ka na kasi mura lang siya pero sako lang siya sa pagkain kasi nga parang ano siya eh, kung ikaw sakaling wala kang pambili, tapos may mabibili ka dahil sa dahil nga sa panahon ngayon mahal ang pagkain.*" (For us, it helps us save, especially when you have absolutely nothing because it's cheap, but it's enough for a meal; if you happen to have no money to buy food, you can afford this because food is so expensive nowadays.)
- **KI 28:** "*Impluwensiya? Ano pag walang budget malaking tulong kasi pag kunyare magkano lang pera mo, pwede pagpag na lang bilhin mo kasi magkano lang naman pagpag 30 pesos lang naman.*" (Influence? Well, when there's no budget, it's a big help because if you only have a little money, you can just buy pagpag since it only costs 30 pesos.)
- **KI 8:** "*Wala po kami budget sa araw-araw, yun lang po pwede naman maulam. Sa mga nakuha ng basura. Minsan nabili sa luto minsan sa mga nangunguha ng basura.*" (We don't have a daily budget, so that's all we can have for a dish. It comes from those who collect from the trash. Sometimes we buy it cooked, sometimes from the scavengers.)

Influence by Family Members

- **KI 17:** "*Ah yung pagpag ay isang, para sa amin siya yung siyang pinaka pangunahing pagkain sa amin bilang mahirap saka sa iskwater lang tumira, tsaka yun lang din ang kaya ng bulsa namin para makakain yung kamag-anak, yung pamilya namin mairaos yung pang araw-araw namin.*" (Ah, pagpag is—for us—it is our primary food as poor people living in the squatters' area; it's also the only thing our pockets can afford so our relatives and family can get through every day.)
- **KI 12:** "*Sa asawa ko po kumakain siya ng pagpag eh kailangan ko din kumain ng pagpag din kahit mahirap, mahirap ang buhay.*" (My husband eats pagpag, so I also need to eat pagpag even if it's hard, because life is hard.)

Peer Influence

- **KI 7:** "*Nakikita ko lang sa iba kaya nakain na din ako.*" (I just see others doing it, so I started eating it too.)
- **KI 17:** "*Mga barkada po namin mga tambay. Ate J bili tayo ng ganito sabi ko 'ha ayoko baka mamaya ganito ganyan', syempre laking probinsya tayo wala namang kahit sabihin na ganito, ayun sinubukan namin.*" (Our friends are bystanders. They said, "Ate J, let's buy some," and I said, "Ha, I don't want to, maybe this or that will happen." Of course, growing up in the province, we didn't have this, but eventually, we tried it.)

Perception of Food Safety and Health Risks

- **KI 5:** "*Minsan masarap, minsan yung iba pangit yung luto eh. Importante yung pagpag samin kasi yun lang kaya ng budget namin.*" (Sometimes it's delicious, sometimes others cook it poorly. Pagpag is important to us because it's all our budget can afford.)
- **KI 20:** "*Parang hindi pero kinakabahan din kami hindi namin alam kung kailan na magkakaroon nalang kami ng sakit. Dahil nga dahil galing po siya sa basurahan...*" (Not really, but we also get nervous because we don't know when we might suddenly get sick. Because, well, it comes from the trash...)
- **KI 6:** "*Wala, gusto lang namin. Mura lang yung pagpag.*" (Nothing, we just like it. Pagpag is just cheap.)
- **KI 14:** "*Wala naman po kasi minsan lang po kami nakain ng pagpag. Wala naman po kami nararamdaman po, okay lang po. Masaya lang po.*" (Nothing really, because we only eat pagpag occasionally. We don't feel anything bad; it's okay. We're just happy.)
- **KI 25:** "*Pero kung araw-araw naman kami kumakain ng pagpag, minsan nakakaramdam din ako ng pagtatae. Pero pag minsan lang, wala naman akong nararamdaman.*" (But if we eat pagpag every day, sometimes I experience diarrhea. But if it's only once in a while, I don't feel anything.)



Lived Experiences of Young Adults Who Consume *Pagpag*

Factors Influencing the Decision to Consume *Pagpag*

- **KI 10:** "*Sa budget, kulang sa budget pero kahit sabihin natin na kumikita asawa ko, kulang pa din sa panggastos sa araw-araw.*" (It's about the budget; we lack a budget, and even though my husband earns money, it's still not enough for daily expenses.)
- **KI 15:** "*Dito literal nayan e, pagpag talaga pinaka tawid gutom ng pamilya dito samin, samin sa lugar namin, sya pinaka main kung wala talaga budget ang tao.*" (Here it's literal; *pagpag* is truly the main hunger-stayer for families here in our area; it's the main option if a person has no budget at all.)
- **KI 24:** "*Para samin mura lang kasi siya, kahit papaano malaking tulong sa amin 'yan kasi 'yan ang pinaka-murang ulam dito sa lugar namin.*" (For us, it's just cheap; somehow it's a big help to us because it's the cheapest viand in our area.)
- **KI 4:** "*Kapag pagpag 30 pesos, makakain na kami. Isang plastic na ng ulam yun.*" (If it's *pagpag*, for 30 pesos, we can eat. That's already one plastic bag of food.)
- **KI 18:** "*Sa isang bente pesos na pagpag, ilan kayo doon na katao pwede nang ulamin.*" (With twenty pesos worth of *pagpag*, several people can already have it as a meal.)

KI 30: "*Dahil mura tsaka kung bibili ka ng manok ang mahal naman, wala ka pambili kaya ayun na lang.*" (Because it's cheap, and if you buy chicken, it's so expensive and you have no money to buy it, so we choose that instead.)

- **KI 18:** "*Nakita ko sa asawa ko na kumakain siya, syempre asawa ko siya eh, kumakain siya ng pagpag, kailangan ko din kumain.*" (I saw my husband eating it; of course, he's my husband, so if he eats *pagpag*, I need to eat it too.)
- **KI 7:** "*Nakikita ko lang sa iba kaya kumain na din ako.*" (I just see it from others, so I ate it too.)
- **KI 17:** "*Mga barkada po namin, mga tambay.*" (Our friends, the ones hanging around.)
- **KI 3:** "*Naengganyo lang sa mga taong kumain ng Pagpag, try-try lang.*" (I was just enticed by people eating *Pagpag*, just giving it a try.)
- **KI 4:** "*Hindi ko naisip na itigil ang pagkain nyan (pagpag), kasi wala kaming budget pangbili ng pagkain. Mas mura kasi yung Pagpag.*" (I never thought of stopping the consumption of that (*pagpag*) because we have no budget to buy food. *Pagpag* is cheaper.)
- **KI 15:** "*Natitigil naman pagkain naming ng pagpag once na meron (budget), pero kung wala talaga, no choice talaga. Hindi mo na matitigil yan e, traditional na ng tao yan dito.*" (Our consumption of *pagpag* stops once there is money, but if there's really none, there's no choice. You can't really stop it; it's like a tradition for the people here.)
- **KI 3:** "*Minsan kasi pag wala kang budget, talagang napipilitan kami mag pagpag. Kung meron kaming budget, hindi kami kakain.*" (Sometimes when you don't have a budget, we are really forced to eat *pagpag*. If we had a budget, we wouldn't eat it.)
- **KI 19:** "*Hindi pa namin nasubukan siguro pag umalis kami dito, maiiwasan.*" (We haven't tried [stopping] yet; maybe if we leave this place, it can be avoided.)
- **KI 12:** "*Never ko naisip na tumigil, para sakin mas masarap kasi yan kumpara sa ibang ulam.*" (I never thought of stopping; for me, it tastes better compared to other dishes.)
- **KI 23:** "*Minsan may nanghuhusga, bakit daw kami kumakain ng pagpag? Ang dumi daw niyan. Pero sa amin normal lang naman.*" (Sometimes people judge us, asking why we eat *pagpag*? They say it's dirty. But to us, it's just normal.)



- **KI 13:** "*Dito sa lugar namin, pangkaraniwan na ang pagkain ng pagpag, hindi na siya tinuturing na kakaiba.*" (In our area, eating *pagpag* is common; it's no longer considered strange.)
- **KI 15:** "*Sa lugar namin, halos lahat kumakain ng pagpag.*" (In our area, almost everyone eats *pagpag*.)
- **KI 12:** "*Nakasanayan na namin, parang normal na pagkain lang.*" (We've gotten used to it; it's like just any normal food.)

Methods of Obtaining and Preparing *Pagpag*

- **KI 10:** "*Kukuhain sa Jollibee, tapos pinipilian tas ibebenta nila sa tao tas kukuhain namin tas ibebenta namin. Kailangan pagkuha papakuluan mo na agad, huhugasan kesa istock pa.*" (It's taken from Jollibee, then sorted, then they sell it to people, then we get it and sell it. Upon getting it, you need to boil it immediately and wash it rather than storing it.)
- **KI 15:** "*(Nakukuha) sa mga fastfood na tira, di naman as in tira, kung бага syempre may mga laman pa. marami nakuha sa fastfood, sa mga collector, sila pinipilian nila, hinihiwalay ang buto buto sa ayos at buo pa.*" ([It's obtained] from fast food leftovers—not exactly scraps, because of course, there's still meat. A lot is gotten from fast food, from collectors; they sort through it, separating the bones from the parts that are still good and whole.)
- **KI 25:** "*Ano, kasi ang pagpag nanggagaling sa basura. Ngayon, pinipilian ng mga tao 'yon, hinuhugasan bago itinda, ganun. Hinuhugasan muna 'yon tapos bubuhusan ng mainit para sigurado daw talagang malinis. Minsan, niluluto nila—prito, adobo, ganun.*" (Well, because *pagpag* comes from the trash. Now, people sort through that and wash it before selling it. They wash it first and then pour hot water over it to make sure it's truly clean. Sometimes, they cook it—fried, adobo style, things like that.)
- **KI 14:** "*Ligtas naman po, kasi wala naman po kami nararamdaman pag nakain ng pagpag, normal lang po na kinakain. Okay lang kainin. Pagbinibili ung pagpag, hinuhugasan po namain ng Mabuti, binabanlawan ng mainit na tubig, tapos doon po namin sya piprituhin ung pagpag.*" (It's safe because we don't feel anything when we eat *pagpag*; it's just normal to eat. It's okay to eat. When we buy *pagpag*, we wash it very well, rinse it with hot water, and then that's when we fry the *pagpag*.)

Frequency and Duration of *Pagpag* Consumption

- **KI 6:** "*Araw-araw ako kumakain ng pagpag.*" (I eat *pagpag* every day.)
- **KI 1:** "*Araw-araw kami kumakain.*" (We eat it every day.)
- **KI 3:** "*Sa isang linggo, siguro 3 beses, minsan 2 beses sa isang araw.*" (In a week, maybe 3 times; sometimes twice in one day.)
- **KI 7:** "*Sa isang linggo mga 2 beses.*" (About 2 times a week.)
- **KI 5:** "*Sa isang linggo, minsan 1 beses lang.*" (In a week, sometimes only once.)
- **KI 9:** "*Hindi araw-araw, sa isang linggo siguro 2 beses lang.*" (Not every day; in a week, maybe just 2 times.)
- **KI 14:** "*Matagal na po, mga siguro 15 years na kami nakain ng pagpag. Dati tatlong beses sa isang araw, ngayon isang beses na lang.*" (It's been a long time; maybe about 15 years that we've been eating *pagpag*. Before, it was three times a day; now, it's just once.)

Personal Experiences and Reflections

- **KI 2:** "*Masaya kasi hindi naman kami araw-araw nakakain ng pagpag.*" (Happy, because we don't get to eat *pagpag* every day.)



- **KI 4:** "*Masaya. Bihira lang din naman kami kumain kaso nga kadalasan kasi malakas kami kumain.*" (Happy. We eat it rarely, but usually, it's because we eat a lot.)
- **KI 12:** "*Wala naman ayos lang, wala naman, okay naman e, nakasanayan na rin, masaya.*" (Nothing, it's fine, nothing's wrong, it's okay; I've gotten used to it, I'm happy.)
- **KI 5:** "*Masarap naman, lalo na pag magaling magluto yung nagtitinda. Parang ulam din naman.*" (It's delicious, especially if the vendor knows how to cook well. It's just like any other viand.)
- **KI 6:** "*Masarap, masustansya. Araw-araw ako nakain. Pang tawid gutom siya.*" (Delicious, nutritious. I eat it every day. It staves off hunger.)
- **KI 14:** "*Masarap ang pagpag po ma'am. Para bawas sa budget sa ano gastusin.*" (Pagpag is delicious, ma'am. It's to reduce the budget for expenses.)
- **KI 4:** "*Na confine ako ng 2 buwan sa GABMMC dahil sa bacteria. Kesa bumili pa kami nung mga mahal na ulam, hindi naman kasya samin. Dun nalang kami sa pagpag, bahala na kung sumakit tiyan.*" (I was confined for 2 months at GABMMC because of bacteria. Rather than buying expensive dishes that wouldn't be enough for us, we just go with pagpag—never mind if the stomach hurts.)
- **KI 9:** "*Kapag nasosobrahan ng pagkain, dun ko nararamdaman yung pagsusuka, nasakit din tiyan ko.*" (When I overeat, that's when I feel like vomiting, and my stomach also hurts.)
- **KI 14:** "*Minsan magtatae ka pag nasobrahan ka sa pagkain, pero pag ano lang 'di naman po. Minsan nahihilo pag nasobrahan ka, tapos magtatae tapos sasakit tyan mo.*" (Sometimes you get diarrhea when you eat too much, but if it's just enough, you don't. Sometimes you feel dizzy when you overindulge, then you get diarrhea and your stomach hurts.)
- **KI 19:** "*Ligtas naman kasi yung mga anak ko kasi simula nung panganak nila hindi naman sila nagkakasakit dahil sa pagpag.*" (It's safe because my children, since they were born, haven't gotten sick because of pagpag.)
- **KI 25:** "*Wala rin naman, pero kung araw-araw naman kami kumakain ng pagpag, minsan nakakaramdam din ako ng pagtatae. Pero pag minsan lang, wala naman akong nararamdaman.*" (Nothing really, but if we eat pagpag every day, sometimes I feel like I have diarrhea. But if it's only once in a while, I don't feel anything.)

Quantitative Data

Table 1. Impact of Pagpag Consumption to the Physio-Psychological Status of the Respondents

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
<i>Napansin ng respondente ang mga pagbabago sa kanilang emosyonal na kalagayan (hal. stress, pagbago-bagong emosyon, atbp.). (The respondent noticed changes in their emotional state [e.g., stress, mood swings, etc.]</i>	2.20	.909	Low Impact
<i>Ang pag-asa sa pagpag ay nagkaroon ng negatibong epekto sa kumpiyansa at pagpapahalaga sa sarili ng respondente. (Reliance on pagpag has had a negative effect on the respondent's confidence and self-esteem.)</i>	2.10	.825	Low Impact
<i>Ang pagkain ng pagpag ay nagdudulot ng pagkabahala ng respondente patungkol sa kanilang kalusugan. (Eating pagpag causes the respondent to worry about their health.)</i>	2.22	.921	Low Impact



<i>Ang pagkain ng pagpag ay nagdudulot ng kalungkutan sa respondente. (Eating pagpag causes sadness for the respondent.)</i>	1.88	.722	Low Impact
<i>Madalas nakakaramdam ng pagkabahala (pagkabalisa) ang respondente. (The respondent frequently feels worry [anxiety].)</i>	2.10	.813	Low Impact
<i>Madalas iniisip ng respondente kung ano ang magiging opinyon ng ibang tao tungkol sa kanilang pagkain ng pagpag. (The respondent often thinks about what other people's opinions might be regarding their consumption of pagpag.)</i>	2.99	1.19	Moderate Impact
<i>Napansin ng respondente ang negatibong pagbabago sa kanilang katawan (hal. pagkalagas ng buhok, pagbaba ng timbang, panunuyo ng balat, atbp.). (The respondent noticed negative changes in their body [e.g., hair loss, weight loss, dry skin, etc.].)</i>	2.10	.789	Low Impact
<i>Madalas nakararanas ng pananakit sa pisikal na pangangatawan ang respondente (hal. pananakit ng tiyan, pagtatae, pagsusuka, atbp.). (The respondent frequently experiences physical pain [e.g., stomachache, diarrhea, vomiting, etc.].)</i>	2.15	.936	Low Impact
<i>Madaling mapagod ang respondente. (The respondent gets tired easily.)</i>	2.12	.796	Low Impact
<i>Madalas nakararanas ng pananakit ng tiyan ang respondente. (The respondent frequently experiences stomachaches.)</i>	2.07	.876	Low Impact
<i>Nakararanas ng problema sa balat ang respondente (hal. pangangati, pantal, pamumula, atbp.). (The respondent experiences skin problems [e.g., itching, rashes, redness, etc.].)</i>	1.80	.756	Low Impact
<i>Naranasan ng respondente ang ilang problema sa kalusugan (hal. pagkalason sa pagkain, impeksyon, atbp.). (The respondent experienced several health problems [e.g., food poisoning, infection, etc.].)</i>	1.87	.847	Low Impact
<i>Napansin ng respondente ang unti-unting paghina ng kanilang pangkalahatang kalusugan simula nang sila ay kumain ng pagpag. (The respondent noticed a gradual decline in their overall health since they started eating pagpag.)</i>	1.96	.830	Low Impact
Grand Mean	2.11		
Std. Deviation	0.502		
Impact Equivalent Interpretation	Low Impact of <i>Pagpag</i> Consumption		

Table 1 shows the impact of *pagpag* consumption on the physio-psychological health of young adults. Based on the results, most of the key informants experienced less impact, with mean scores ranging from 1.80 to 2.22. One item also stood out with a moderate impact—the tendency of key informants to think about what others might say or think about them for eating *pagpag*, with a mean of 2.99.

Table 2. Vital Signs of the Respondents

Vital Signs	Mean	Range	Interpretation
Temperature	36.5 °C	36.0 °C - 37.0 °C	Within normal range
Pulse Rate	85.7 bpm	60 - 100 bpm	Within normal range



Respiratory Rate	20.3 cpm	12 - 20 cpm	Within normal range
Blood Pressure (systolic)	112	90 - 120 mmHg	Within normal range
Blood Pressure (diastolic)	75.0	60 - 80 mmHg	Within normal range
Oxygen Saturation	97.7%	95-100%	Within normal range

Per various health references, the normal body temperature ranges from 36.5 to 37.5 degrees celsius. According to the table above the mean temperature among key informants was 36.5 degree celsius, which falls under the normal range and indicates no signs of fever. In terms of key informants' pulse rate, the average mean recorded was 85.7 which is within the normal adult range of 60 to 100 bpm. Similarly, the average respiratory rate was 20.3 which is still within the normal range of 12 to 20 bpm. Blood pressure results also fall within the healthy range, with a mean systolic of 112 and diastolic pressure of 75.01. Oxygen saturation averaged at 97.7 which indicates no significant respiratory distress.

Table 3. Capillary Blood Glucose of the Respondents

Capillary Blood Glucose	Mean	Range	Interpretation
	103 mg/dL	70-110 mg/dL	Within normal range

Table 3 shows that the mean capillary blood glucose level was 103, which is within the normal fasting range of 70 to 110 mg/dL according to the World Health Organization.

Table 4. Nutritional Status of the Respondents

Category	Mean	Range	Interpretation
Body Mass Index	22.5	18.5 - 24.9	Within normal range
Height	156 cm	May vary	The result suggests average stature, though it may vary with individual factors.
Weight	54.9 kg	May vary	The result may indicate a within normal range but can fluctuate with individual factors.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution Table of the Respondents Based on Nutritional Status

Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Underweight	34	24.8%
Normal	73	53.3%
Overweight	22	16.1%
Obese Class 1	8	5.8%
Total	137	100%

Table 4 shows the mean height, weight, and Body Mass Index (BMI) of key informants who consume *pagpag*. The mean height (156 cm) and weight (54.9 kg) of the key informants fall within the normal physical ranges. Meanwhile, the mean BMI of 22.5 also falls within the "normal" BMI range of 18.5–24.9, according to WHO standards.

DISCUSSION

The qualitative findings reveal that young adults' perceptions and lived experiences surrounding *pagpag* consumption are shaped by a complex mix of financial hardship, social influence, generational normalization, and perceived food safety practices. Despite its known risks, *pagpag* has evolved into a survival strategy embedded in daily life among food-insecure communities.

Perceptions of *Pagpag* Consumption

Young adults mainly view *pagpag* as a practical solution to hunger caused by poverty. Financial limitations push families to rely on cheap food scraps, making *pagpag* a normal and accepted option. Many believe that washing, boiling, and frying make it "safe enough," which lessens fear of contamination.



Family practices strongly shape these perceptions. Those who grew up eating *pagpag* see it as part of their routine diet, while peer influence also encourages acceptance when others in the community consume it without obvious harm. Although some recognize health risks, survival needs often outweigh concerns, and *pagpag* becomes an affordable, accessible choice.

Lived Experiences of *Pagpag* Consumers

Lived experiences further highlight that economic constraints are the primary drivers of *pagpag* consumption among young adults. Some individuals consume *pagpag* routinely due to persistent financial limitations, while others depend on it intermittently based on their available resources. The widespread availability of local vendors facilitates access, and consumers often rely on repeated washing and cooking to reduce perceived risks.

Many respondents reported consuming *pagpag* since childhood, which has contributed to its normalization and integration into daily dietary practices. While a few expressed a desire to discontinue the practice, most acknowledged that cessation would only be feasible if their financial situation improved. For others, *pagpag* has become a familiar, convenient, or even preferred option, shaped by long-term exposure and habit.

Physio-Psychological Health of Young Adults

The results indicate that *pagpag* consumption has a generally low impact on the physio-psychological health of young adults, with mean scores ranging from 1.80 to 2.22. Respondents reported minor changes in emotional states, physical discomfort, and health concerns. A notable exception was the moderate impact (mean = 2.99) related to concerns about social judgment or stigma, suggesting that perceived opinions of others may affect psychological well-being more than physical effects. Overall, the data indicate that while some respondents experience minor physical or emotional effects, psychosocial factors may have a more pronounced influence.

Vital Signs of Young Adults

Key informants' vital signs, including temperature (36.5°C), pulse rate (85.7 bpm), respiratory rate (30.3 cpm), blood pressure (112/75 mmHg), and oxygen saturation (97.7%), all fell within normal ranges. These findings indicate no immediate signs of physiological distress, although normal vital signs do not fully reflect overall health status. Subtle nutritional deficiencies or metabolic imbalances may still exist, despite stable readings.

Capillary Blood Glucose of Young Adults

The mean capillary blood glucose was 103 mg/dL, which is within the normal fasting range of 70–110 mg/dL. This suggests that, when properly cleaned and reheated, *pagpag* consumption does not appear to directly cause elevated blood sugar. Nevertheless, the nutrient-poor and high-calorie content of typical *pagpag* items indicates a potential risk for metabolic imbalance if consumed regularly over time.

Nutritional Status of Young Adults

The mean height (156 cm), weight (54.9 kg), and BMI (22.5) of respondents were within normal ranges, suggesting overall physical stability. However, BMI classification revealed that 24.8% were underweight, 16.1% overweight, and 5.8% obese, indicating a dual burden of malnutrition. Underweight individuals may experience long-term nutrient deficiencies due to low-quality diets, while overweight and obese respondents may be at risk for weight-related health issues from high-calorie, nutrient-poor foods. This variability highlights that *pagpag* consumption contributes to inconsistent nutritional outcomes, reflecting the broader effects of economic and dietary limitations.

CONCLUSION

Most key informants were aware of the potential health risks associated with consuming *pagpag*, yet they continued to do so as a means of survival. Several respondents have consumed *pagpag* for many years, yet their vital signs remain within normal ranges, and they have not experienced serious health complications. Some reported minor issues, such as gastrointestinal discomfort or emotional stress, particularly in response to social judgment regarding their consumption of *pagpag*. However, for the majority, these effects were not significant,



as their primary concern was meeting basic nutritional needs. Health outcomes varied among respondents, with some appearing to maintain adequate nutrition while others showed indications of potential nutritional deficiencies. It is important to note that these findings are specific to this group of key informants and should not be generalized to suggest that *pagpag* is universally safe for consumption.

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